

# ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

## DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



### NEWS RELEASE

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Date Issued: Tuesday, July 24, 2012  
Time: 2:00 pm

### Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #37

**COGHILL DISTRICT:** Waters of the Esther Subdistrict north of a latitude line at 60° 46.10' N, including the WNH THA and SHA, will be open to commercial DRIFT GILLNET AND PURSE SEINE harvest up to a line of buoys seaward of the barrier net for a 14-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Wednesday, July 25. Anadromous stream closures within the WNH THA will not be in effect during this fishing period. Regulation 5 AAC 24.368(f) states that purse seine gear may be used in the Esther Subdistrict to harvest surplus chum salmon.

**Waters of the Granite Bay Subdistrict will be open to commercial DRIFT GILLNET harvest for a 14-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Wednesday, July 25.**

Preliminary estimates of commercial harvest from the 36-hour period that closed on Sunday, July 22 are now 114,400 chum, 5,800 sockeye, and approximately 57,000 pink salmon with 207 deliveries reported. Cumulative CPF harvest estimates to date are now approximately 2.3 million chum, 424,000 sockeye, and 186,000 pink salmon.

**SEINE FISHERIES:** Aerial surveys of the Eastern, Northern, Unakwik, Coghill, Northwestern, Eshamy and portions of the Southwestern, Montague and Southeastern districts were flown last week. Surveys of these districts are anticipated to be flown again this week. Early season indicators of wild stock chum and pink salmon escapement in these districts are behind anticipated numbers and therefore do not support a wild stock fishery at this time. VFDA estimates 300,000 pink salmon secured for broodstock near the Solomon Gulch Hatchery. VFDA's broodstock needs are approximately 346,000 pink salmon.

The preliminary CPF harvest estimate from the 14-hour period in the Eastern District on Monday, July 23 is 60 sockeye, 181,000 pink and 400 chum salmon with 97 deliveries reported. Cumulative pink salmon harvest in the Eastern District through July 20 is approximately 973,800 fish for cost recovery and approximately 9.2 million fish for common property fisheries.

**NORTHERN DISTRICT:** Waters of the Northern District are now closed. There was no reported harvest from the 14-hour period in Hidden Bay on Sunday, July 22.

**EASTERN DISTRICT:** Waters of the Eastern District are now closed. Waters of Port Valdez are being closed to allow for continued run entry to meet VFDA's pink salmon broodstock needs.

As a reminder, **all salmon that are harvested but not sold by commercial permit holders in Alaska waters must be reported on a fish ticket at the time of landing** (5AAC 39.130(c)(10)). Fish tickets have a "not sold/personal use" field to report these salmon.

**The next scheduled PURSE SEINE salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Wednesday, July 25. The next scheduled GILLNET salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Wednesday, July 25.** Permit holders are advised that unscheduled announcements based on current escapement data may occur at any time inseason either establishing an additional period or extending an open period.

Announcement recordings are available for **gillnet fisheries at 907-424-7535 and seine fisheries at 907-424-7345. In addition, announcement recordings are available in Anchorage at 267-2843.**

Additionally, announcements, inseason harvest data, and escapement data are available at the following web addresses:  
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.main> (Copper River homepage) or  
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareapws.main> (Prince William Sound homepage).

Unless otherwise specified, all openings are clock openings based on Alaska Daylight Time, which is based on Coordinated Universal Time and may be obtained by calling 303-499-7111.

The department encourages commercial permit holders to renew their licenses early and to check their CFEC vessel registration stickers to make sure that they are current.

The department also encourages permit holders to report observed violations to Wildlife Safeguard at 800-478-3377. Reports are anonymous and cash rewards may be paid for successful prosecution of violations.

PWS commercial fishers are reminded that area fisheries often necessitate fishing in close proximity to marine mammals. Under the Marine Mammals Protection Act (MMPA), the PWS drift gillnet fishery is classified as a Category II fishery. Participants in Category I and II fisheries must be registered in the Marine Mammal Avoidance Program (MMAP) to be authorized for lawful incidental, but not intentional, marine mammal takes during fishing. However, this authorization explicitly does **not** exempt holders of commercial fishing permits from the MMPA prohibition on takes of marine mammals listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act. As a participant in the PWS drift gillnet fishery you are automatically registered in the Marine Mammal Authorization Program (MMAP) by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). As a participant in a Category II fishery, you must:

- Maintain an MMAP Authorization Certificate, or a photocopy, on board the vessel while engaging in any of the fisheries identified on the reverse side of the certificate. For non-vessel or set net fisheries, the enclosed Certificate, or a photocopy, must be in the possession of the permit holder during fishing operations. This Certificate, in combination with a current, valid state or Federal fishing permit, will serve as your authorization to incidentally take non-endangered or non-threatened marine mammals in the course of commercial fishing operations.
- Report all injuries and mortalities of marine mammals within 48 hours of returning from the trip during which these takes occurred using the MMAP Mortality/Injury Reporting Form (visit [http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/interactions/mmap\\_reporting\\_form.pdf](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/interactions/mmap_reporting_form.pdf) for a copy).
- If so requested, take an observer aboard your vessel.

Purse seine and set gillnet gear are classified as a category III fisheries under the MMPA. Category III fishery participants are automatically exempted from the incidental take prohibition in the MMPA. Therefore, you do not need to maintain the MMAP certificate aboard your vessel, but must report any incidental takes of marine mammals within 48 hours of the incident or your return to port. Such reports must be made on the Marine Mammals Authorization Program Mortality/Injury Reporting Form.

Because some marine mammals are also listed under the Endangered Species Act, incidental takes are also regulated under that act and are not authorized. **All** MMPA category fisheries are liable for incidentally taking ESA listed species.

Please reference [http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/esa\\_factsheet.pdf](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/esa_factsheet.pdf) for a list of marine mammals currently listed under the ESA (you should periodically check with the National Marine Fisheries Service for any changes in listed species). Under the ESA, take means to “harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.” 16U.S.C. 1532(19); and harass means an “intentional or negligent act or omission which creates the likelihood of injury to the wildlife by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavioral patterns which include, but are not limited to, breeding, feeding, or sheltering.” (50 C.F.R. 17.3).

To reduce the possibility of incidentally taking an ESA listed species and its associated liability ADF&G recommends that:

- Fishermen participating in area fisheries remain vigilant in monitoring gear when marine mammals may be present.
- Fishermen use avoidance measures (e.g., not fishing or relocating fishing activities when marine mammals are present or likely to be present) to minimize interactions with marine mammals.
- Avoid fishing in areas where marine mammals are likely to be present at night or when visibility or weather conditions make it difficult to spot marine mammals.

For further questions concerning marine mammal regulations call NMFS at 907-271-5006.